

## B-17

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# **B-17**

by [NN04](#)

## Summary

The end of the line for one WWII bomber crew.

Over the cacophony of battle, a shout was heard clearly over the radio.

“ROCKETS!”

A loud pop followed by the sound of metal tearing apart filled my ears.

“Duke, report!” Our pilot demanded into the radio. “Duke!” Still nothing.

I heard my nickname. “Stitch! Get down there and give me a damage report!”

I acknowledged and descended into the main body of the B-17.

As I got closer to the nose, I could see that the entire glass bubble was gone. The howling of the wind was deafening and the chill it brought from the high altitude air felt like sewing needles against my skin.

Two figures laid there, unmoving. I gingerly stepped over the body of our navigator. He was new, barely a week in. I did not know him too well but I still felt bad that in that moment, I could not for the life of me remember his name.

My friend and our bombardier, Richard “Duke” O’Donnel, had not moved a muscle from his position on his side.

As I gently rolled him onto his back, I knew he had died instantly. Pieces of shrapnel were all over his body, as if he was stung by a porcupine, and his entire torso was covered in blood. The oxygen mask was still situated on his face but the tube was shredded. His eyes were glassy.

My dear friend was gone.

Ignoring the pilot’s calls for a damage report, I stared out the massive open hole in the plane, the aerial battle around me not stopping for a second.

I watched in morbid fascination as a bf109 flew at our fort head on, lining up a killing blow.

The Flying Fortress was tough but it could not hope to survive this next onslaught.

Tiny flashes erupted from the German fighter’s wings and nose.

Were it not for daylight and for the war, someone from the ground could very well mistake it for twinkling stars.

As I watched those twinkling stars get ever larger, I began to wonder what would happen to us unfortunate ten.

Would the plane fly back up from the ground and into the heavens?

Would we continue our plunge into the depths once the plane hit the earth? All the way down to the Inferno itself?

Would there be nothing? Would there be just an empty void?

I closed my eyes and waited for whatever it was to come.

The last thing I heard was the sound of bullets slamming into metal.

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